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Compulsory Education.

Thesis for the degree of M. L.

By R. L. Brown. Class '75

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Education should be compulsory.

Enlightened public opinion everywhere will say that all children should be well educated. This will generally be admitted. Education is often held in high esteem by those who have had but limited advantages. Its want is generally deplored.

If it be granted that public opinion favors a wider dissemination of knowledge, and wishes a greater number of trained minds, which the acquirement of such knowledge implies; then it should farther be granted that public opinion ought of itself to make compulsion. Upon questions of common concern, the enlightened sentiment of any community should be supreme. It should have, above all things, the power to realize its ideas in education. It should be able to make it general, - as general as is designed in the present system. In New England, perhaps, can best be seen the influence of popular opinion in educational matters.

With all their stern and alleged narrow views of life, the Puritan Fathers yet knew to lay broad and deep the foundations of an admirable common school system. They came from the mother country few in numbers and limited in material resources. As the world goes, they would be counted poor. But were they poor? "Poor!" no rich! rich in the elements of a true manhood; rich in all those controlling ideas and powers which endowed them - mighty, handed to conquer the bleak wilderness and there to develop a new and grand civiliza-

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tion. They left a rich legacy to posterity in the idea imbodied in the common school. The best preparation for life, they knew to be, thorough mental training and that they carefully provided for. As the result of their care, in the New England of to-day, high schools, academies and colleges are everywhere the rule. There, nearly every young man will attend & the higher institutions of learning and very many will go through college. All things encourage one in such a purpose. One must be inspired to advancement in such surroundings.

It is in the very air. Any community, however small, will have a number of finely educated men who, by their culture, social standing and interest in learning, be great helps educationally. Popular opinion there makes education a necessity; and such statistics as Horace Mann's Mass. Reports show that this necessity is fully recognized and fully supplied.

In a general way, laws may be said to originate from the highest moral sense of men banded together into society; or, differently stated, they are the healthful public opinion upon matters pertaining to society put into organic form. Usually laws are thought of as merely restrictive; but they really have a two-fold force. They not only restrain one by a penalty from doing bad things, but constrain one by a penalty to do good things. Constrain is almost too gentle; they compel. Now bearing in mind that the law, as we have above, is merely public opinion

received.

of season. Did he have in mind the place he was to take in modern times, when he says: "I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify mine office!"? Paul met and confounded the acutest intellects of the pagan world just as his writings to-day confront and confound the boldest and ablest infidels. Much learning had not made him mad, the most noble Festus to the contrary, notwithstanding. Would that there could be one more meeting like that when Paul stood upon Mar's Hill at Athens surrounded by the mightiest minds among the ancients and showed that the results of all their critical research pointed clearly to the - Unknown God; him I declare unto you"!

Would that materialists, pantheists, evolutionists, atheists and all could to-day sit at Paul's feet while he showed them that their "unknown god" and his "God of Revelation" are one and the same! There is no conflict between religion and learning. There can be none. They are supplemental.

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